



## *Report to the Auburn City Council*

Action Item

Agenda Item No. **10**

City Manager's Approval

**To:** Vice Mayor and Councilmembers  
**From:** Mayor Kevin Hanley  
**Date:** August 13, 2012  
**Subject:** Street Naming Process for Auburn

### **The Issue**

Should the City of Auburn develop a process for naming future streets and should those street names represent prominent people from Auburn's fascinating history?

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

1. Direct the Streetscape History and Arts Advisory Committee (SHAAC) to examine Auburn's history and develop a list of 20 one-word names for new streets that are currently not being used as per the City of Auburn Street Index.
2. Direct SHAAC to: (a) develop the list of one-word names based on prominent people who had a very strong connection to Auburn and who made a positive contribution to Auburn; and (b) for each one word name provide a one-sentence description of why the street should be named after that particular person.
3. Direct SHAAC to provide the City Council with all 20 potential street names and their top 10 recommended street names that should be used for new street names in the Baltimore Ravine project and other future in-fill projects.
4. Direct the Mayor to ask the Auburn Journal if they would want to conduct a reader election to determine, based on SHAAC's list of 20 street names, the top 10 names for future streets in Auburn.
5. Direct staff to review current city ordinances and return with any recommendations.

### **Background**

Current City of Auburn practice, like most cities, is to allow the developer to name new streets as the development is completed. But if the out-of-town developer is not familiar with Auburn's rich history, this policy can result in boring and generic names like "Birch

Avenue” or faddish names, say representing a Tuscan theme, that has nothing to do with Auburn’s fascinating history.

I don’t want this to happen when Baltimore Ravine is developed and new streets are named. When Baltimore Ravine is developed there will be 6 to 8 new streets that will need a name. I believe that the city and Auburn residents should select the names of all future streets in Auburn. The City Council should set up a process of providing at least 10 available names for all new streets in the Baltimore Ravine project and other in-fill projects. I believe that the name of each new street should be after a prominent person with a strong connection to Auburn and who made a positive contribution to our town.

In the past, in some of our older neighborhoods, Auburn has recognized people who made significant contributions to our history by honoring them with a street name. For instance, we have streets with the following names: Birdsall, Blocker, Chamberlain, Robie, Poet Smith, Mikkelson, and Walsh. The City Council recently approved the naming of a street after WWII fighter ace, Bud Anderson.

But there are quite a few prominent people in Auburn’s history who do not have streets named after them. For instance, a new street could be named after Claude Chana, who discovered gold in the Auburn Ravine in May 1848, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, Auburn’s connection to the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition, or Stacy Draglia, the Olympic Gold Medalist in the pole vault in 2000. In developing potential names for tiles in Central Square, the Streetscape History and Arts Advisory Committee (SHAAC) has already developed lists of names of prominent residents of Auburn that could be used for street naming purposes.

I propose the following process. First, the City Council should direct the SHAAC to examine Auburn’s history and develop a list of 20 one-word names for streets that are currently not being used as per the City of Auburn Street Index. Second, SHAAC should propose to the City Council the top 10 names that should be used for street names in the Baltimore Ravine project and other in-fill projects. Each one-word name of the street should be accompanied by a one-sentence description of why the street should be named after that particular person. *Attachment A* includes my list of 10 potential street names for SHAAC’s consideration.

The City Council should consider involving Auburn area residents to participate in the street naming process. The second part of this process would be to ask the Auburn Journal if they want to involve their readers in selecting the top 10 street names. The City

Council could submit the top 20 street names create by the SHAAC to the Auburn Journal for them to publish a paper and/or web-based ballot. The ballot would have the one-word name of the street and the one-sentence explanation of why that person deserves to have a new street named after him or her. Like the “Best of the Best” contest, the Auburn Journal could run this election and let the city know the results of the top 10 names. The city could honor the election results of how many votes each of the 20 proposed street names received. This “election” could generate an interesting discussion about Auburn’s history. If the Auburn Journal does not want to participate, the City Council could decide the top 10 future street names after receiving input from SHAAC and the public.

**Alternatives Available to Council; Implications of Alternatives**

Allow the developer of the Baltimore Ravine project designate all the street names.

**Fiscal Impact**

Absorbable costs by SHAAC.

*Attachment A – Mayor Hanley’s 10 Potential Street Names.*

## **Name a Street Ballot**

(Listed in alphabetical order)

<b><u>Street Name</u></b>	<b><u>Justification for the Street Name</u></b>
Beecher	Auburn resident Mark Beecher, also known as “Klondike Ike,” established the Auburn Community Foundation and the “Beecher Room” at the Auburn Library in 1973.
Chana	Claude Chana was a French immigrant who discovered gold in the Auburn Ravine on May 16, 1848.
Charbonneau	Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, son of Sacajawea and Toussaint Charbonneau was the youngest member of the Lewis Clark Expedition; the only infant depicted on an American coin and worked in Auburn (1848-1866).
Crutcher	William Crutcher was the Deputy Sheriff in the famous shootout that ended the infamous career of Rattlesnake Dick.
Draglia	Stacy Draglia, an Auburn native, became the first to win an Olympic Gold Medal in women’s pole vaulting in 2000.
Eulalie	Auburn resident Mary Fay “Eulalie” Shannon was California’s first woman poet.
Gordon	Selma Gordon was the first woman Mayor of Auburn and helped organized the city-county library merger.
Holladay	Samuel Holladay (1822-1914), Auburn’s first judge or Alcade, takes credit for naming Auburn in August 1849 after hearing William Gwynn’s recitation of the poem “Sweet Auburn.”
Lardner	William Lardner was a City & District Attorney, state legislator, and he helped build the opera house, library and lumber mill.
McCann	Vernon McCann was the business manager of the Auburn Journal and vigorous supporter of the community and the inspiration for the annual “McCann Award.”